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DIRECTORATE OF
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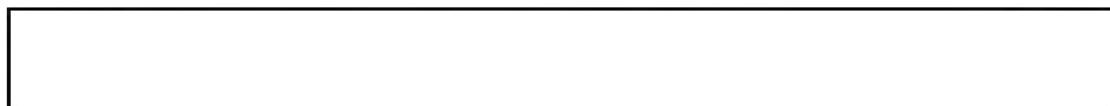
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THAILAND: Backstage maneuvering is intensifying in the expectation that Prime Minister Thanom may step down ahead of schedule.

Although Thanom, who must retire as head of the armed forces next year, has announced that he would retain the prime ministership until early 1973, most political observers in Bangkok believe that it is unlikely that he has either the inclination or power to hold on that long. After almost seven years of unimaginative but steady stewardship, Thanom has become a casualty of his own style of leadership and of problems at home and abroad over which he, or any Thai prime minister, has only limited control. Thanom's self-effacement was ideally suited to the sort of collective rule by which Thailand has been governed since Marshal Sarit's death. There has been a growing feeling among military leaders, however, that it is not appropriate for the tough decisions that the country now faces.

In its handling of controversial legislation--the tax bill, the budget, the proposed press act--the government has been divided and indecisive. Not only has Thanom had trouble whipping parliament into line, but the government's own ranks have become increasingly divided and unresponsive to the prime minister's leadership. Thanom himself has grown increasingly weary of the political wars.

He is nonetheless under some pressure from his supporters to continue in office as long as possible while they build support for either a congenial replacement or another potential rival to Deputy Prime Minister Praphat, who now appears almost certain to replace Thanom. [REDACTED]

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SOUTH KOREA: The administration has been shaken by the vigorous challenge already being offered by the opposition candidate in next year's presidential contest.

Kim Tae-chung of the New Democratic Party has gotten his campaign off to an early start with a stumping tour of the major provincial cities, drawing large and enthusiastic crowds. A forceful orator, he is challenging President Pak by name and has not hesitated to speak out on such potentially explosive issues as national defense and the administration's continuing failure to implement a constitutional requirement for local self-government. He has also attacked favoritism within the national militia--an institution that affects virtually every South Korean family. In addition, Kim has raised a variety of less sensitive but nonetheless compelling issues, including women's rights and tax reform.

The initial reactions of harried administration leaders have ranged from public denunciation of Kim's proposals to veiled threats of outright suppression. In some instances the authorities have resorted to such clumsy, generally unsuccessful tactics as offering free admission to local movie houses on the day Kim is to speak and flooding his rally site. More subtly, they have sought to curtail media coverage of his campaign and to cut off his sources of campaign funds.

Kim is a long way as yet from becoming a threat to Pak's re-election. There is a danger, however, that administration overreaction will erode the political stability that Pak has built up over the years. Pak reportedly has demanded that something be done about Kim, raising the possibility that a subordinate, in the hope of currying presidential favor, might take some drastic action which would stir greater support for the opposition. [redacted]

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RHODESIA-UK: Exploratory talks are likely to begin soon between Britain and Rhodesia, but there is little prospect for a settlement. Official British sources are quoted in the press as saying that UK and Rhodesian representatives will meet in South Africa next week for private talks.

Conservative leaders are committed by their election campaign promises to try to negotiate an accord with the white government in Salisbury. However, like his predecessor, Harold Wilson, Prime Minister Heath faces the almost insoluble problem of reaching an agreement acceptable to both the Rhodesians and the African Commonwealth members. Relations with these African states are already complicated by Britain's impending decision on whether to sell arms to South Africa. In addition, Heath has said that any agreement must include a guarantee for unimpeded progress toward majority rule.

As for the Rhodesians, they are unlikely to settle for much less than formal recognition under their present constitution, which calls for continued white-minority rule. Prime Minister Smith said recently that he would be willing to negotiate with the Conservative government, but that he was not optimistic about reaching a settlement.

Caught between a desire to settle the Rhodesian problem and a fear of breaking up the Commonwealth, the Heath government will probably merely go through the motions of keeping its campaign pledge. The Conservatives have said, however, that they would like to modify or discard economic sanctions altogether at a later date. [redacted]

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NOTES

CONGO (B) - CONGO (K): The two Congos have taken another step in the detente reached last June by agreeing to resume diplomatic relations on 15 December and to restore river traffic by the new year. Brazzaville President Ngouabi evidently sees closer cooperation with Kinshasa as a means of weakening the dominant position of the leftist-extremists in his regime.

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Any attempt at moderation would probably stimulate the extremists to mount a strong challenge to Ngouabi. If unchecked, such a development could destroy the rapprochement

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TANZANIA: President Julius Nyerere was overwhelmingly re-elected in last week's general elections, and most of his cabinet was returned to office. Nyerere was the only candidate for president but, under Tanzania's one-party system, two men are permitted to run for each parliamentary and local office. The candidates were not allowed to criticize or to debate national policy during the campaign, however, so that these contests were decided largely on the basis of personality and local bread-and-butter issues. Although there were many abstentions--only 3.6 million out of 5 million registered voters went to the polls--this was more likely a result of apathy than any dissatisfaction with Nyerere.

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AUSTRIA: Chancellor Kreisky's eight-month-old minority Socialist government has come under severe attack from the opposition and press on the issue of army reform. The Socialists wish to reduce conscript service from nine to six months without taking measures to offset any resulting weakening of the army. It had been expected that Kreisky's first major battle would revolve around his budget, but his request to parliament on 21 October on this subject turned out to be relatively noncontroversial. He is now likely to try to find some way to make his army reform program more broadly palatable.

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GREECE: A government spokesman has announced that the one-year accord with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will not be renewed in its present form. The agreement, which expired on 4 November, permitted ICRC representatives to enter Greek prisons and to interview prisoners without any witnesses or officials present. The issue that apparently blocked renewal was the ICRC's insistence that two prisons be closed because of their unsatisfactory conditions, although the regime claims this matter is still open for discussion. As of 14 September, exile camps still held 667 prisoners out of the approximately 6,000 leftists and hard-core Communists rounded up during the April 1967 coup.

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CEYLON: The government's takeover next week of the import and distribution of motor vehicle tires and tubes will force Firestone--the major US firm to be affected--to close down operations. Ceylon produces about \$6 million worth of tires, and imports about \$4 million annually. Firestone provides about one quarter of the tires from abroad. The government suspended all tire imports last May in anticipation of this takeover, which probably will result in shortages early next year.

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

The United States Intelligence Board on 5 November 1970 approved the following national intelligence estimate:

NIE 87-70 "The Emerging Black Nations
of the Caribbean" [redacted]

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